

Every Child Learning Every Day



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READY TO LEARN

Books for May

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Regardless of where you live, learning about ourselves and our neighbors brings understanding and friendships that can last a life time.

"Salaam: A Muslim American Boy's Story," by Tricia Brown, 2006, Henry Holt. A truly insightful and well done book about an

American boy who happens to be part of the second largest religion in the world. Reading about Salaam makes readers realize he is very much like them and would be a delightful friend to know.

"What a Family! A Fresh Look at Family Trees," by Rachel Isadora, 2006, P. Putnam. It all started with Ollie who was the shortest in his kindergarten classroom. When you finish reading this cool book on genealogy you will certainly look at your relatives in different ways that are likely to make you smile.

"Can You Say Peace?" by Karen Katz, 2006, Henry Holt. Pre K-1. From around the world happy children play and say peace in their native language. An English pronunciation guide is included. A timeless book for young children.



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Session ends without action on preschool issues

Dear Reader:

The Idaho Legislature finished its annual business in April without any significant changes in the laws governing child care or pre-kindergarten services.

Lawmakers had some interesting proposals to consider, including state standards for child care and whether to allow local school districts to provide pre-school services to children.

The issue of state standards for child care is coming on the heels of more and more cities adopting locally developed standards. Child advocates will continue working on legislation to create consistent standards. We will strive to keep you informed.

The issue of whether local school districts should be able to offer preschool services to all students still lacks consensus among lawmakers. Currently, many school districts are in-



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involved in preschool through federal mandates for services to be provided to special education and migrant students. Many would like to see districts be able to expand this service

across the state.

Lawmakers assigned a task force to study the issue over the summer, and to come back with recommendations.

The task force is charged with:

- *Reviewing Idaho's existing state, federal, and private resources devoted to early childhood education and development;

- *Identifying options the State of Idaho could consider to impact early childhood education and development; and,
- *Making recommendations to advance kindergarten readiness of Idaho children entering our state K-12 education system.

What can parents and caregivers, who care about these issues, do in the interim? I invite you to contact your local representative and let them know of your opinion.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Shadow tag helps children explore chasing, fleeing

Physical Education (P.E.) Central is a website (www.pecentral.org) where educators and others share lesson plans for activities aimed at different age groups.

Below is a preschool activity from that site.

Activity

Shadow Tag

Purpose of activity

To allow young children the opportunity to explore the skills of chasing and fleeing.

Materials needed

A sunny day and some open space.



Description of idea

This activity requires plenty of space and lots of sunshine! Have the children pair up and then find an open space with their partner. Designate one child as the "walker" and the other the "tagger."

Ask the children to find their shadows. On the signal "go" the tagger tries to "tag" the "walker" by stepping on his or her shadow. Have the children switch roles and continue playing.

Teaching suggestions

You may have to explain the importance of trust and honesty to help make this game fun and active. To eliminate touching (and possibly knocking a child down) the tagger should shout "caught" when stepping on the partner's shadow.



PARENT TIPS

Confidentiality is important

The Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children provided this letter from a parent as a reminder about the importance of keeping information confidential.

Dear Child Care Provider,

I'm glad that my family information is safe with you. It's confidential – not to be read by anyone but center staff and not to be shared with anyone without my permission. This is important to me and my child because it protects our reputations – what others think and say about us. Unfortunately, our reputations have no protections against loose talk – only your caring about us and your being careful.

So PLEASE REMEMBER:

1. When you talk about me or my child to someone, she could be my best friend or my worst enemy. She may report it all back to me or tell it to my mother-in-law.

2. When you talk out loud in the a restaurant about horrid little Scotty who's driving you crazy – someone may hear you who knows just who Scotty is.

3. When you speculate about the reasons for trouble my child is having ("Sometimes I think Scott is hard of hearing") others may repeat them as fact ("I heard from Scott's teacher that Scott has a hearing problem!").

4. I am especially sensitive to opinions about my child's behavior and how his misbehavior might be my fault. I very often feel (and sometimes say) I'm a poor mother but don't appreciate any one else suggesting it!

5. You have no idea what information I want kept confidential. It could be my boyfriend's name, how often I move, whether my dad was an alcoholic, or my address and phone number.

6. Finally, I ask you to be aware of what my child hears. If someone remarks about him or me when he is listening, be sure your answer doesn't give him the idea that something is wrong. (Such as "Scotty's Mom sure doesn't know how to handle him.") He will remember your comment long after you've forgotten.

Thank you,
Scotty's Mom

NUTRITION

Strawberries make for a sweet, healthy spring treat

Strawberries are sweet fruit that are yummy to eat. During the spring and early summer you and your young children can find strawberries in the grocery store, at farmers' markets, and fruit stands in abundance.

The red color of the strawberry is very pretty and makes it appetizing to young children.

Strawberries can be eaten all throughout the day. You can put strawberries on top of waffles and pancakes in the morning. They can also be added to yogurt for a fresh sweet treat. Strawberries can be eaten fresh as a snack and even



part of a meal.

Many people also use strawberries in desserts, such as strawberry short cake or fresh strawberry pie. Strawberries contain vitamin C which helps

children grow strong and stay healthy.

An easy treat to make with strawberries is a smoothie. This treat should be made with the help of a parent or older brother or sister. Smoothies can be made using low-fat milk and even low-fat buttermilk, strawberries, and ice.

You will need to use a blender to make the smoothie nice and smooth. All you need is $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of strawberries, and four to six ice cubes. Process all ingredients in a blender then pour in a tall glass and enjoy the taste of spring.

SMART STARTS

Build math skills by talking, reading about numbers

Cognitive development, or the ability to think and reason, covers many skills that children require for an understanding of some basic concepts. Math skills can begin very early in life, given the opportunity.

Birth to 1 year: Read books to your child that have numbers and counting. You can count how many objects in your home that are the same, such as spoons and forks..

1 to 3 years old: Give your child simple choices that he can make regarding the number of crackers he has, "Would you like one or two crackers?" Show your child the difference between one and two. He

can also help sorting laundry by matching two socks of the same color.

3 to 5 years old: Measuring can be an opportunity to teach your child basic math concepts such as simple fractions and more versus less. Get a recipe and ask your child to help you make it. Let him go through the process of measuring out items with you. Call his attention to items that you need more of and items you need less of. Use a measuring cup that shows fractions. You can also ask questions like "if you had two more raisins, how many would you have?"

Skills needed for kindergarten: Basic math concepts are foundational for learning addition, subtraction, and advanced math skills necessary in school.

Books and other resources: "

"Kids' Baking: Over 60 Delicious Recipes for Children to Make" by Sarah Lewis and "One Fish, Two Fish, Three, Four, Five Fish" by Dr. Seuss.

Smart Starts is a column of everyday activities to help parents and early childhood caregivers build school readiness skills in young children.

ACTIVITY

Spring's a good time to capture, decorate shadows

By Jennifer Williams

2002 Idaho Teacher of the Year

Spring is a wonderland of surprises for children. A walk around the yard or to the park can allow kids to talk about all they see, touch, smell, or hear. Everywhere there are flowers growing, birds building nests, squirrels digging holes to bury peanuts, and even baby ducks.

The weather is perfect for an exploratory walk/talk with your preschooler, pointing out things that weren't there just a week ago. Showing a child the shadows that are created by the sun is an exercise in looking beyond normal objects to see a shadow. Shadows of people can be

made to move, while shadows of trees and flowers can be observed for quite awhile. Drawing shadows on butcher paper is a way to help a young child understand what they are and how funny they can be sometimes.

Materials needed

Butcher paper or some other large sheet of paper; drawing utensils (chalk, markers, paint); scissors; rocks, glue, poster board, and a sunny day.

What to do

Take a walk to explore shadows. Look for shadows that are skinny, tall, short, funny, or interesting. Cut the

paper larger than the shadow and lay it on the shadow. Tell your preschooler that you are going to play "capture the shadow." Hold the paper in place with rocks. Outline the shadow with a marker or piece of chalk. Paint and decorate the inside areas of the shadow.

If the shadow looks like a recognizable object (person, car, etc.) it can be decorated to look like that object. Glue the cutout to poster board and hang.

Drawing the shadow of a friend or family member is fun, especially if the child is allowed to decorate "Mom" or "Dad" however he wants.